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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9039
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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0981
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1769
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

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STATE FOR EEB/ESC/TFS, ISN/CPI, EEB/OTF, EAP/K
NSC FOR PAN AND CHANG
TREASURY FOR OFAC
COMMERCE FOR OEE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/22/2018
TAGS: [EAIR](#) [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [KLIB](#) [KS](#) [UK](#) [IR](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: KOREAN AIR AGREES TO COMPLY WITH TDO ON 747
AIRCRAFT FOR IRAN; FURTHER CLARIFICATIONS REQUESTED

REF: A. (A) STATE 18255
 [1](#)B. (B) SEOUL 363
 [1](#)C. (C) STATE 21134
 [1](#)D. (D) SEOUL 422
 [1](#)E. (E) STATE 29431
 [1](#)F. (F) SEOUL 573

Classified By: DCM BILL STANTON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B&D).

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. Please see Para 5.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (MOFAT) Disarmament and Nonproliferation Director Lee Jang-kuen called in Emboffs March 22 to discuss the results of the ROKG's interagency meeting held yesterday on Ref (E) demarche. Lee noted the ROKG duly informed Korean Airlines (KAL), the Korean company carrying out the 747 overhauls for Balli Group (BG), of the Temporary Denial Order (TDO) on March 21. KAL agreed to cooperate fully with the TDO. KAL urgently requested, however, guidance on whether routine operational checks and minimal maintenance on the aircraft can continue to ensure their safety and operability. KAL representatives also indicated that such work is necessary to prevent serious deterioration in the aircraft that could expose KAL to significant civil liabilities.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) According to Lee, KAL officials believe that BG will soon register the aircraft in Greece to obtain valid airworthiness certificates from that country to facilitate their departure from Korea. KAL officials noted that they had received no information on the aircrafts' likely onward destination or the nationality of the pilots that would fly the aircraft. Lee was nonetheless confident that KAL would continue to comply with the TDO to keep the aircraft on the ground.

[1](#)4. (S/NF) At the March 21 interagency meeting, Ministry of Construction and Transportation officials stressed their own statutory basis for denying takeoff clearances was extremely limited and such action would be unprecedented. MOFAT officials indicated national security grounds might be invoked for the detention, but the National Intelligence Service (NIS) representative had reiterated the ROKG's need for additional U.S. intelligence to help make that determination. As a result, Lee urgently requested additional releaseable intelligence from the USG on Balli Group's previous and current activities tied to Iran's

support for terrorism in Iraq and elsewhere.

¶5. (S/NF) ACTION REQUEST: Please provide guidance as soon as possible on (A) KAL's request to continue doing minimal work on the aircraft to ensure their safety; and (B) BG's previous and existing activity in support of Iranian terrorist-related activity. In addition, we recommend Washington consider consulting with the Greek government to block BG's efforts to circumvent the TDO.
VERSHBOW